

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 25, 2023

President Joseph Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We request urgent action to stop the human rights abuses by the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazad of Bangladesh, and to give the people of Bangladesh the best possible chance for free and fair parliamentary elections to be scheduled this fall.

Various NGOs have documented hundreds of instances of human rights abuses by the government of Sheikh Hasina since she assumed power in January 2009 – including reports by Amnesty International<sup>1</sup>, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House<sup>2</sup>, and even the United Nations<sup>3</sup> - that show Hasina's government has increasingly repudiated democratic systems, perpetrated widespread abuse against its citizens, conducted torture, committed extrajudicial killings, jailed journalists<sup>4</sup>, disappeared opponents, and assaulted or killed peaceful protesters. The well-documented abuses by the Hasina government are not confined to her political opponents; the government also has persecuted ethnic and religious minorities in Bangladesh.

Since Sheikh Hasina's rise to power, the Hindu population has been halved. Looting and burning of households, destruction of temples and religious idols, murder, rape, and forced religious conversion are causing Hindus to flee Bangladesh.<sup>5</sup> Sheikh Hasina's government also has persecuted Bangladesh's minority Christian population — burning and looting places of worship, jailing pastors, and breaking up families when religious conversion occurs.

In recent months, tens of thousands<sup>6</sup> of peaceful protesters have demonstrated for fair and free elections, which are the people's only hope for a change in the Hasina government. In response, Bangladesh's Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), the major perpetrator of torture, disappearances, and extra judicial killings in Bangladesh, have arrested, intimidated, and even killed peaceful demonstrators. The RAB has been characterized as a government "Death Squad" by numerous NGO's including Human Rights Watch.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/bangladesh/report-bangladesh/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/bangladesh/freedom-world/2022>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/01/12/bangladesh-violence-repression-ahead-general-elections>

<sup>4</sup> <https://rsf.org/en/journalists-censored-threatened-beaten-two-month-crackdown-bangladesh>

<sup>5</sup>

[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/MinorityIssues/Session10/Item5/AdditionalStatements/item5\\_-\\_Bangladesh\\_Minority\\_Council\\_.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/MinorityIssues/Session10/Item5/AdditionalStatements/item5_-_Bangladesh_Minority_Council_.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.euronews.com/video/2022/12/10/watch-bangladesh-opposition-mounts-huge-protest-in-capital-dhaka>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/7/notorious-bangladesh-police-unit-received-spy-training-in-uk>

In a recent investigation by German state broadcaster DW and Sweden-based news agency Netra News, two whistleblowers and former members of the RAB, confessed that these incidents of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances could not be possible without the Home Minister and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's approval.<sup>8</sup>

The U.S. government designated RAB a "serious human rights abuser" more than a year ago and sanctioned several law enforcement authorities responsible for many of the killings and other atrocities. Yet, the Hasina regime has only intensified its systemic repression of the people of Bangladesh since sanctions were imposed.<sup>9</sup> The sanctions by the U.S. have not done enough to slow the flagrant human rights violations and democratic backsliding of Sheikh Hasina's government.

In addition to crimes against their own people, Hasina's misconduct encourages other bad actors in South Asia to make common alliance, and hurts America's national security interests as they gang together and draw closer to China and Russia.

We request appropriate measures to give Bangladesh their best chance for free elections, including stricter individual sanctions, banning Bangladesh law enforcement and military personnel from participating in UN peacekeeping missions.

Respectfully,



Scott Perry (PA-10)  
Member of Congress



Bob Good (VA-05)  
Member of Congress



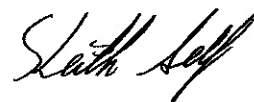
Barry Moore (AL-02)  
Member of Congress



Tim Burchett (TN-02)  
Member of Congress



Warren Davidson (OH-08)  
Member of Congress



Keith Self (TX-03)  
Member of Congress

<sup>8</sup>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR0kcZZqm37PTqRzHvSZ1plc2ZoE\\_O3WbUrIPdZGs0Siz9fwzVUDSDm5F\\_8&v=aVxG7K1PGHM&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR0kcZZqm37PTqRzHvSZ1plc2ZoE_O3WbUrIPdZGs0Siz9fwzVUDSDm5F_8&v=aVxG7K1PGHM&feature=youtu.be)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/13/us-stands-firm-sanctions-rights-abusers-bangladesh>